

apology a year later, and he probably had in mind the second volume especially and the conditions under which it was written. It is just such work as we might expect from a boy without experience who, in the reaction after a period of unnatural tension ending in great misfortune, is endeavouring in headlong haste to bring an earlier literary sketch to some sort of conclusion. We now instinctively feel that the artistic impulse has spent itself, that the author is no longer inspired by genuine love of his subject, and that we are dealing with a mere piece of crude and hasty book-making. There is no definite artistic motive, not even the motive of con-trition, though the treatment has taken a colour from the author's own misfortunes; and certainly the hero now is as far from reflecting Disraeli's ideals and ambitions as this second volume is from exhibiting his literary power.

So much on the question as to the sense in which Vivian Grey is a portrait of Disraeli himself; on the larger question as to whether the novel as a whole is a gallery of portraits from living originals something remains to be said. Elaborate keys were published at the time, one especially, as it appeared in *The Star Chamber*, being supposed to have the author's sanction. But the key-makers were probably just as well able as the author to affix a name to most of the characters. It required no great penetration to translate Lord Past Century into Lord Eldon or the Duke of Waterloo into the Duke of Wellington. By thin disguises such as these and by the frequent introduction of names of living persons the reader is certainly encouraged in the first part of *Vivian Grey* to search for real characters behind the fictitious names. Disraeli admitted as much himself in a letter which he wrote after the publication of the sequel in the following year. Colburn had made a circuitous attempt to extract from him information as to the prototypes of his characters; and Disraeli's answer well defines his position then and later on the